



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

UPDATE: OPERATION ICE PALACE
**SIMS GENERAL STORE OWNER PLEADS GUILTY
TO ROLE IN METH CONSPIRACY**

SPRINGFIELD, Mo. – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced that two co-defendants pleaded guilty to their role in a methamphetamine conspiracy. The guilty pleas are the result of Operation Ice Palace, a multi-jurisdictional investigation into pseudoephedrine diversion and methamphetamine manufacturing in southwest Missouri.

Billy Richard Brassfield, 55, of Pineville, Mo., and **Jody Weston**, 22, of Washburn, Mo., pleaded guilty before U.S. Magistrate Judge James C. England to their role in a methamphetamine conspiracy that resulted in the manufacture and distribution of between 1.5 and 5 kilograms of methamphetamine.

By pleading guilty, both co-defendants admitted that they conspired to distribute 500 grams or more of methamphetamine between January 1999 and March 14, 2002, in McDonald County, Mo.

Specifically, **Brassfield** assisted co-defendants in obtaining precursors, such as pseudoephedrine, for the manufacture of methamphetamine, Graves said. **Weston** did the same.

During the conspiracy, **Brassfield** owned and operated Sims General Store, and would divert pseudoephedrine that he obtained for the store to a co-defendant in the case for the purpose of manufacturing methamphetamine, Graves said. **Brassfield** also allowed methamphetamine to be manufactured on his property.

Weston admitted that he assisted in cooking methamphetamine and acted, at times, as a lookout during the manufacturing process. He also admitted that she distributed methamphetamine to others.

Brassfield and **Weston** are the fourth and fifth co-defendants to plead guilty to their role in the methamphetamine conspiracy. Three other co-defendants also have pleaded guilty.

On May 19, 2004, **Kevin Davis**, 43, of Exeter, Mo., pleaded guilty to conspiracy to distribute methamphetamine. By pleading guilty, **Davis** admitted that he was present during 10 to 15 methamphetamine cooks and would act as a lookout during the manufacturing process. **Davis** was originally arrested on March 21, 2001, driving a stolen vehicle in McDonald County. Upon searching the vehicle, law enforcement officers discovered components of a methamphetamine laboratory, including lithium batteries, coffee filters, empty bottles of pseudoephedrine and anhydrous ammonia.

On May 19, 2004, **Craig Guinn**, 41, of Westville, Okla., pleaded guilty to conspiracy to distribute methamphetamine. By pleading guilty, **Guinn** admitted that he assisted in gathering precursors for the manufacture of methamphetamine. Specifically, he admitted that he participated in the theft of a 1,000-gallon anhydrous tank in Granby, Mo.

Michele Kreitel, 32, address unknown, pleaded guilty to conspiracy to distribute methamphetamine. By pleading guilty, **Kreitel** admitted that she purchased methamphetamine and assisted in the manufacture of methamphetamine between January 1999 and March 14, 2002.

All of the defendants in this case were originally charged in an indictment returned by a federal grand jury on Oct. 16, 2003, in Springfield.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Randall D. Eggert. It was investigated by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, COMET (the Combined Ozarks Multi-jurisdictional Enforcement Team), the Missouri State Highway Patrol, the Southwest Missouri Drug Task Force, and the McDonald County Sheriff's Department.

This news release, as well as additional information about the office of the United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, is available on-line at

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